

Amendment

Serial No. 09/996,221

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-26 (Canceled).

27 (Currently Amended). ~~The machine of claim 1~~ A wrapping machine for wrapping trayed food products, comprising:

a wrap station at which trayed food products are wrapped;

a film dispensing station for drawing out film over trayed food products at the wrap station;

a conveying system for moving trayed food products along a defined path to the wrap station including:

a first conveyor along a first portion of the defined path;

a second conveyor along a second portion of the defined path, the first conveyor having an output end which is aligned at a height with and feeds to an input end of the second conveyor for feeding trayed food products traveling along the first conveyor to the second conveyor;

at least one sensor for determining a lateral position of trayed food products moving along the first conveyor, the sensor comprising an optical sensor arrangement positioned to avoid direct contact with trayed food items;

at least one actuator for controlling a relative lateral position between the output end of the first conveyor and the input end of the second conveyor;

a controller for receiving signals from the sensor and for controlling the actuator, wherein, for a given trayed food product moving along the first conveyor, and based upon signals received from the sensor, the controller effects movement of the actuator to define a relative lateral position between the output end of the first conveyor and the input end of the second conveyor to place the given trayed food product in a desired lateral position on the second conveyor,

wherein the actuator is connected for moving the output end of the first conveyor along a laterally extending axis while an input end of the first conveyor remains laterally stationary.

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28 (Currently Amended). ~~The machine of claim 1~~ A wrapping machine for wrapping trayed food products, comprising:

a wrap station at which trayed food products are wrapped;

a film dispensing station for drawing out film over trayed food products at the wrap station;

a conveying system for moving trayed food products along a defined path to the wrap station including:

a first conveyor along a first portion of the defined path;

a second conveyor along a second portion of the defined path, the first conveyor having an output end which is aligned at a height with and feeds to an input end of the second conveyor for feeding trayed food products traveling along the first conveyor to the second conveyor;

at least one sensor for determining a lateral position of trayed food products moving along the first conveyor, the sensor comprising an optical sensor arrangement positioned to avoid direct contact with trayed food items;

at least one actuator for controlling a relative lateral position between the output end of the first conveyor and the input end of the second conveyor;

a controller for receiving signals from the sensor and for controlling the actuator, wherein, for a given trayed food product moving along the first conveyor, and based upon signals received from the sensor, the controller effects movement of the actuator to define a relative lateral position between the output end of the first conveyor and the input end of the second conveyor to place the given trayed food product in a desired lateral position on the second conveyor,

wherein the actuator is connected for moving the input end of the second conveyor along a laterally extending axis while an output end of the second conveyor remains laterally stationary.

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29 (Currently Amended). ~~The machine of claim 12~~ A trayed food product wrapping machine for wrapping packages, comprising:

a wrap station at which trayed food products are wrapped;

a film dispensing station for drawing out film over trayed food products at the wrap station;

a conveying system for moving trayed food products along a path to the wrap station, the conveying system being selectively adjustable for varying a lateral position of trayed food products traveling along the path, the conveying system including a first conveyor along a first portion of the defined path, a second conveyor along a second portion of the defined path, the first conveyor having an output end which is aligned at a height with and feeds to an input end of the second conveyor for feeding trayed food products traveling along the first conveyor to the second conveyor;

at least one sensor for determining lateral position of trayed food products;

a controller for receiving signals from the sensor and for controlling adjustment of the conveying system, wherein, for a given trayed food product moving along the path, and based upon signals received from the sensor, the controller effects adjustment of the conveying system to define a relative lateral position between the output end of the first conveyor and the input end of the second conveyor so as to establish a desired lateral position of the given trayed food product when the given trayed food product reaches the wrap station,

wherein the conveying system includes an actuator that is connected for moving the output end of the first conveyor along a laterally extending axis while an input end of the first conveyor remains laterally stationary.

30 (Currently Amended). ~~The machine of claim 12~~ A trayed food product wrapping machine for wrapping packages, comprising:

a wrap station at which trayed food products are wrapped;

a film dispensing station for drawing out film over trayed food products at the wrap station;

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a conveying system for moving trayed food products along a path to the wrap station, the conveying system being selectively adjustable for varying a lateral position of trayed food products traveling along the path, the conveying system including a first conveyor along a first portion of the defined path, a second conveyor along a second portion of the defined path, the first conveyor having an output end which is aligned at a height with and feeds to an input end of the second conveyor for feeding trayed food products traveling along the first conveyor to the second conveyor;

at least one sensor for determining lateral position of trayed food products;

a controller for receiving signals from the sensor and for controlling adjustment of the conveying system, wherein, for a given trayed food product moving along the path, and based upon signals received from the sensor, the controller effects adjustment of the conveying system to define a relative lateral position between the output end of the first conveyor and the input end of the second conveyor so as to establish a desired lateral position of the given trayed food product when the given trayed food product reaches the wrap station,

wherein the conveying system includes an actuator that is connected for moving the input end of the second conveyor along a laterally extending axis while an output end of the second conveyor remains laterally stationary.

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